

REMARKS

The rejection of Claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, paragraph 2 has been addressed with the foregoing amendments to that claim.

The rejections of Claims 9, 10 and 14-16 as being anticipated by Kashiwamura et al. under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and of Claims 11, 13, 17 and 20 as being obvious over Kashiwamura et al. in view of Thomas et al. under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are traversed. Reconsideration of each of these rejections is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and following comments.

Applicants' invention differs from the cited prior art, taken alone or in hypothetical combination, in at least two salient respects. First, the pressurizable elements are sized and configured to produce punctiform pressures on the seat back and seat cushion, also referred to as localized pressure, which allows for a very sophisticated change in seat contour. Second, and also related to the foregoing, the punctiform pressures at localized positions can produce massage effects.

The prior art does not teach or suggest the claims invention. The Thomas et al. air massager cushioning device has nothing whatsoever to do with seat contouring. It is merely a support device. The Kashiwamura et al. controlled seat does not utilize punctiform pressure and has nothing to do with massaging

in the well understood meaning of that term. That is, the cited reference is silent with regard to systematically massaging soft tissue by rubbing, stroking, kneading, tapping or the like. All that this reference teaches is changing the air bag seating pattern every 30 minutes or so to relieve fatigue but not the nerve relaxation and/or stress relief achieved with a massage. Nor does the Office Action point to anything in Kashiwamura et al. to suggest the presence of a control device for producing a massage. And even if it could be argued that the two cited references could have been combined without exercising impermissible hindsight, the resulting hypothetical seat would not provide the claimed massaging and contouring achieved with the present invention.

Accordingly, early and favorable action is now earnestly solicited.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

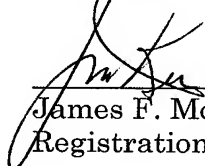
If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and

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please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit
Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #095309.56013US).

Respectfully submitted,

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